

NASA GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER
EQUAL OPPURTUNITY ADVISORY GROUP RETREAT

Presentation of Dr. Harriett G. Jenkins, Tuesday September 16, 2003, 1:00 – 2:00 pm
University of Maryland Conference Center

Role of Goddard Equal Opportunity (EO) Advisory Committees

I. Role in Fulfilling Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) Goals / What to Look for in Affirmative Employment Plans (AEPs)

- A. Know the GSFC AEP priorities (GSFC's policies, goals, and objectives about EO and AA are spelled out in the document and to its regulatory oversight agency.)
 - 1. The current status: the degrees of under representation of one's constituent group by its most populous occupational series, directorate, grade level, managerial/supervisory levels, etc.;
 - 2. How hires, promotions, training , and career advancement are intended to lessen the under representation
 - 3. How systemic issues of access and accommodation, etc. for individuals with disabilities and for disabled veterans are being addressed
- B. Ensure that one's Advisory Group has identified and concerns it may have, or any barriers that still exist to the AEP priorities being carried out; and that the group has worked with the EO Officer, the Human Resources Director, (the Advisory Group for Individuals with Disabilities with the Management Operations Director), the Diversity Council, the EO Council, and GSFC managers to ensure that their concerns and issues are a part of the AEP and are being addressed in that document.
- C. The above policies, priorities, and procedures are directed at helping GSFC accomplish superbly its technical missions and goals with the "best possible workforce of scientists, engineers, and technologists;" and the ultimate aim is for that workforce also to be diverse and integrated at all levels of the Center. (*Words in "quotes" are only from GSFC's Strategic Implementation Plan 2001.*)

II. Effective Communication with Management

- A. The effectiveness of an Advisory Group, as well as its effectiveness in communicating with management, is directly dependent upon how well it carries out its responsibilities.
- B. (*According to a DRAFT of NASA Goddard Policy Directive, GPD 3713.1*) The Center Director has established EO Advisory Committees to provide advice and recommendations to senior management on systemic issues that affect the recruitment, hiring, placement, advancement, and other aspects of employment and workplace climate of their constituents.

Each Advisory Committee will:

1. Meet with the Center Director at least once a year, and provide advice, guidance, recommendations to the Director in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the Center's affirmative action program and plans on the employment and advancement of the constituent group.
2. Serve as a focal point for the concerns of constituents on matters affecting their employment at Goddard through personal contact with the Director, the Associate Director, and other officials of the Center.
3. Provide educational forums for employees and managers on constituent's issues.
4. Help resolve Center-wide problems affecting constituents.
5. Contribute to the development of action items designed to address barriers to advancement or recruitment of constituents in the Center's Affirmative Employment Plan.
6. Meet quarterly with the Director of the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to discuss OHR issues raised by one's constituents and to be informed about OHR initiatives. Additionally, the Committees on People with Disabilities will meet quarterly with the Director of Management Operations (and the Assistant Director of Management Operations at Wallops, respectively) to discuss systemic issues relating to people with disabilities.
7. Committee Chairs will serve as members of the Diversity Council and as advisors to the Equal Opportunity Council.
8. Use the annual and quarterly meetings with Goddard senior management for evaluation of accomplishments and programs and activities that are ongoing or planned for the coming year.
9. Use the monthly Advisory Committee meetings, open and accessible to all individuals who would like to attend, to provide forums for discussion of the programs and activities of each committee and special emphasis program. Constituent feedback is essential for successful implementation of this policy.

C. Communications with managers which are intended to inform and advise should present issues and concerns that have been well researched, that focus on and address key factors that are relevant to the matter, and that suggest or provide constructive solutions or options that be undertaken.

III. Lessons Learned

A. Quality of leadership is crucial to the success of an Advisory Group.

1. Visionary and intentional, with a keen sense of issues, mission, and strategic steps for achieving objectives.

(Not only promotions, but career planning and advancement, succession planning, mentoring, project management training, committee and task assignments, internships or training assignments in different organizations or across matrix disciplines, etc. are examples of some

programmatic ideas that might work for a particular constituent group. Utilize the Advisory Group experience to help hone one's skills as an "organizational change agent.")

2. Able to articulate to one's Advisory Group members and constituent group what the Advisory Group is and does, and what it is not

(Constituent group members might be asked to share what experiences have been the most helpful to them since they arrive at GSFC . . . and which were the least. What are their ideas for enhancing the exhilaration and sense of accomplishment from working at GSFC? How are they going about getting to know other professionals or persons in their work field who are different from themselves? Etc. Be able to engage, listen, and hear!)

3. Capable of working collaboratively and consensually to elicit innovative ideas from constituent groups and to get tasks accomplished.

(Ensure your constituent group is represented in awards, co-op and work-study programs, special long term training opportunities, doctoral and faculty fellowships, educational grants, research grants, procurement contracts and sub-contracts, etc. . . in everything that GSFC or NASA does!)

4. Good manage of her/his primary role and responsibilities as well as an excellent planner, leader, and implementer of this secondary or collateral assignment.

- B. Good programmatic ideas that address the issues and concerns of the constituent group but also move the Center as a whole forward in learning and understanding seem most effective and long lasting.

(The more recent review of 800 science and engineering employees, following settlement of the Class Action Complaint of GSFC African American employees, led to corrections, promotions, and an accelerated leadership process.)

- C. Needs assessments or surveys to really determine the most pressing issues for one's constituent group might be indicated and useful.

(This may give the Advisory Group a more accurate determination of what the problems really are.)

- D. Activities that are relevant to and supported by more than one Advisory Group's needs are generally more strongly supported and have greater long term impact.

(Multi-cultural (and/or multi-lingual) events that reflect several constituent or cultural groups. Bring Child/Children to Work Day. Invite key GSFC managers to talk to Advisory Groups about their suggestions for minorities and women advancing in their organizations.)